

Message Text

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67

ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-08 L-03 IGA-02 RSR-01

/133 W

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R 111426 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4305

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: AGR, EAID, MT

SUBJECT: GOM REQUEST FOR HARD WHEAT ASSISTANCE

ALSO FOR AID/ W, AGRICULTURE

1. MALTA ONE OF MANY CONSUMER COUNTRIES AROUND WORLD ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY WORLDWIDE SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES FOR WHEAT AND COURSE GRAINS. MALTA CONSUMES ABOUT 50,000 TONS OF WHEAT PER YEAR, 94 PERCENT OF WHICH IS SUBSIDIZED BY GOM. CURRENT DRAIN ON GOM BUDGET FOR THIS SUBSIDY IS ONE MILLION MALTA POUNDS PER YEAR.

2. ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PM, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE XUEREB REQUESTED MEETING WITH ME TODAY TO DISCUSS MALTA' S SPECIAL NEED FOR 9,000 TONS HARD RED SPRING WHEAT. COUNTRY HAS SUFFICIENT SUPPLIS THIS COMMODITY LAST ONLY THROUGH END OCTOBER. PM INSTRUCTED XUEREB REQUEST DONATION SIMILAR TO SOFT WHEAT GIFT PROVIDED BY FRANCE AND ITALY OR SOME ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD SUBSIDIZE PRICE BELOW WORLD MARKET PRICE. I REPLIED I SAW NO REPEAT NO POSSIBILITY OF DONATION AND WHILE I WOULD HAVE TO INQUIRE REGARDING THE QUESTION OF PRICE SUBSIDIES, I COULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE ENCOURAGING ON THIS

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AVENUE.

3. XUEREB ADDED PM APPROVED TWO DAYS AGO RECOMMENDATION HIS MINISTRY THAT MALTA JOIN INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT AND ASSOCIATED FOOD AID AGREEMENT. OFFICIALS IN XUEREB' S MINISTRY AWARE THAT ON OCCASION SUPPLIER COUNTRIES HAVE MADE DONATIONS OR CONCESSIONAL PRICE ARRANGEMENTS TO CONSUMER COUNTRIES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL WHEAT COUNCIL " CLUB."

4. ACTION: WHILE WE CANNOT SUPPORT GOM REQUEST FOR DONATION, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ON CONCESSIONAL TERMS FOR MARGINAL CONSUMERS SUCH AS MALTA? ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE CONCESSIONAL PRICE ON COARSE GRAINS THAT WOULD FREE RESOURCES FOR WHEAT PURCHASE AT MARKET PRICE. XUEREB REQUESTED REPLY WITHIN NEXT TEN DAYS SINCE REGARDLESS OUT-COME THEIR REQUEST THEY WILL HAVE TO ORDER SUPPLIES BY LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY IN ORDER NOT REPEAT NOT TO RUN OUT OF STOCK IN FALL. GETZ

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TAGS: EAID, MT, AGR
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